

# THE INDEPENDENT PRESS

— ON —

## THE MOWAT GOVERNMENT

### A FAVORABLE VERDICT.

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#### The Financial Administration of the Province.

On April 11th, 1890, the *Mail* said editorially:—"The Government can also *make out a good case for itself in regard to its administration of the finances.* After dealing liberally by the municipalities and exhibiting a creditable enterprise in building railways and erecting public institutions, Mr. Mowat is able to show a comfortable surplus. Instead of having a surplus of five or six millions in the treasury, Quebec has a debt of thirty millions, and, in spite of the direct taxes imposed on commercial corporations and of other revenue-raising devices, a fresh loan is inevitable. It must also be admitted that Mr. Mowat has passed many progressive measures affecting the general interests of the community, AND THAT, ON THE WHOLE, HIS MANAGEMENT HAS BEEN CLEAN AND FREE FROM SCANDAL. *These are POWERFUL reasons for GIVING HIM A NEW TERM.*"

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#### The Ontario Ballot Act.

The *Toronto Telegram*, of March 7, 1890, said: "As it stands, the Ontario Ballot Act is an improvement upon the systems that govern Dominion and Municipal elections. The provision for numbering ballots, it is argued, enables partisan officials to trace the choice of the voter. The Attorney-General guards against this offence by placing deputy-returning officers under obligation to respect the secrecy of the ballot. Oaths do not always bind excited partisans. The men who are bad enough to seek to identify the voter by the number on his ballot paper are qualified to profit by the opportunities which the Dominion and Municipal systems offer for spoiling ballots, and stuffing ballot-boxes. It is out of the fulness of bitter experience that our faith in the superiority of the Ontario system is speaking. The numbered ballot provides a way by which bad votes can be judicially subtracted from the total of a candidate who wins by fraud. When the ballots are not numbered the votes of dead men, of absentees, of repeaters, pass at their face value and cheat the choice of an honest majority out of his rights."

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#### The Government Temperance Record.

*The Good Templar of Canada* (the organ of the Good Templars), of January 15, 1890, said: "Mr. Mowat's government has always shown a desire to meet the wants and desires of Temperance men in passing legislation favorable to Temperance Reform, and on no occasion, that we are aware of, have they ever refused to make any amendments to our laws that were deemed necessary. It therefore becomes our duty to do all in our power to strengthen their hands, and not to

be carried away by wordy politicians, who are full of promises at election times. Actions are what we want, and the record of the Mowat government speaks for itself."

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### The Licensing Power.

The *Mail* of January 13, 1890, says: "Mr. MEREDITH's proposition to restore the licensing power to the Municipal Councils does not meet with much favour anywhere. Theoretically, the Councils are best fitted to exercise it, and, as Mr. MEREDITH has shown, Mr. GLADSTONE warmly approves of vesting the newly organised Councils in England with such authority. Experience is better than theory, however, and our experience of liquor control by councils was on the whole unsatisfactory. The ward "heeler" was usually the first choice of a city aldermen, while in the rural districts licenses were bestowed upon anybody who could afford the fee, the chief aims of the councils being to increase the revenue. There were exceptions, of course, to the rule, but, speaking generally, the system worked badly; and most persons felt relieved when the Provincial Government took the power to itself."

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### The Parliament Buildings.

The *Toronto Telegram*, of April 23rd, 1890, said:—"Hon. C. F. Fraser is fortified against effective attack upon his dealings with the question of erecting new parliament buildings. The Opposition appeals to provincial jealousy of, and agricultural prejudice against Toronto, by attacking an expenditure essential to the safety and the dignity of the province. New parliament buildings were sorely needed. Ontario could not continue to house public documents of immense value and public men of less worth in a dingy brick barn. The Government supported an outlay that is barely sufficient to satisfy the requirements and keep up the dignity of the province. The Minister of Public Works is seeing that the province gets value for every cent it spends. The country is not being cheated, and when the Opposition cannot boldly impute wrong to the Hon. Mr. Fraser it is unfair to declaim against an expenditure that was wholly unavoidable. As to the architect, the Government acted upon its judgment of what was right. Political interest would have dictated the choice of a native Canadian to originate and execute designs for the new Legislative building. The Government put aside every consideration but that of fitness, and did not allow the unpopularity of its course to deter it from doing what was right." And again, on May 19th, 1890, it said:—"Of all the small-sized issues ever imported into Ontario politics the complaint about the Ontario Government's dealings with the Parliament buildings is the smallest. There is absolutely nothing in it. From beginning to end the Government has acted in the best interests of the country. It would have been easy for it to employ a Canadian architect and excuse his mistakes by appeals to a spurious patriotism. The Government could gain no political glory by its action. It served the province in this particular at the expense of party interest, and time will declare praise, not censure, to be the just portion of the men charged with responsibility of the erection of the new legislative block."

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### The Fort William "Journal" on the Mowat Government.

"Regarding the present Administration, it must be admitted that it is more than a political success. Hon. Oliver Mowat has been Premier for eighteen years, during which he has had the continuous confidence of the Legislature and the people. This is a record for which we cannot find a parallel in the history of the whole world. If any of our readers will furnish one we will be pleased to publish it. On several important questions regarding the welfare of the Province Mr. Mowat has come into conflict with the Federal Government, and



on each occasion has been successful. Among these may be mentioned the Northern and Western Boundaries, the Streams Bill, the Escheats Question, etc. This, with his valuable legislative enactments and superior administrative abilities, undoubtedly ranks Mr. Mowat as a statesman of the first order. In his Cabinet the Premier has had some able assistants, and the business of the different departments has not been allowed to suffer. Messrs. Mowat and Ross are excellent speakers, able debaters and enthusiastic workers. They take an active interest in the advancement of moral, social, temperance and religious work. They are gentlemen of high Christian character, and of the type in whose hands we are pleased to see the direction of our Municipal, Provincial or Dominion affairs."

### The Government Commission as to the Eastern Ontario Schools.

Referring to the Commission appointed by the Ontario Government to enquire into the French Public Schools of this Province, the *Mail* of 28th August, 1889, said: "On the whole the Commissioners appear to have done their work thoroughly and conscientiously."

Referring to "French-English Schools," the *Mail* of October 22nd, 1889, said: "The 'Instructions to teachers and trustees of French-English Schools' just issued by the Minister of Education are designed to carry into effect the recommendations made in the report of the Government Commissioners who recently visited the French districts." \* \* \* \* "These instructions if properly carried out, ought to do much to remedy the unsatisfactory state of affairs which has been found to exist in the French Schools of the Province."

*The Canadian Baptist* said: "This evidently impartial report, while it does not perhaps add largely to the information already possessed by those who have followed up the discussion in the Legislature and in the press, will be of great service as giving, in concise form, a reliable basis for inference and action. Most unprejudiced persons will, we think, agree that the recommendations of the commission are eminently judicious. They include about all the action that seems necessary and desirable."

*The Canadian Presbyterian* said: "As was to be expected from men of their character and standing, they did their work with diligence, thoroughness and impartiality. Their report has just been issued and it is strictly correct to say that it is untinged by political coloring. The report is valuable because it presents a clear and unbiassed statement of the actual state of affairs in these schools dominated, as they largely are, by French Roman Catholic influences; it will also, doubtless, lead to the adoption of the corrections necessary to preserve the integrity and usefulness of the Public School system in Ontario."

*The Presbyterian Review* said: "With the report we are much pleased. It is full, carefully prepared and clear. The Commissioners have done their work well, and we are happy to agree to the recommendations they make."

*The Christian Guardian* said: "As far as we can judge, the Commissioners have done their work with great thoroughness and fairness."

*The Toronto Mail* said: "On the whole the Commissioners appear to have done their work thoroughly and conscientiously."

*The Ottawa Citizen* (Tory) said, "It was hinted in some quarters that the report of the Commissioners appointed by the Ontario Department of Education to investigate the condition of the Public Schools of the Province in counties where the French-Canadian population is numerous would prove a white-washing one, and that the object aimed at would not be attained; but a careful examination of the report, briefly summarized in yesterday's *Citizen*, shows that the Commissioners performed the duty assigned to them in a most careful and thorough manner."



### A British Columbia Opinion.

The Vancouver, B.C., *World*, an independent journal, says :—“ Hon. Oliver Mowat has been in power uninterruptedly for eighteen years. A determined effort now, as on previous occasions, will undoubtedly be made to dethrone him and his Ministry, some of whom are amongst the ablest men in the Dominion. The Opposition in the Ontario House is not strong either in brain power or administrative ability. For many years Mr. Meredith has led a forlorn hope. Himself a popular gentleman, of fair abilities, his following in capacity are hardly equal to the ordinary County Councils of the Keystone Province.”

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### A Winnipeg Opinion.

The Winnipeg *Free Press*, also an independent journal, says :— “ The real object of their (the Opposition) crusade is to get hold of the revenue and resources of Ontario on the strength of Protestant prejudices. They think there is a chance of riding into power on the Protestant Horse, and they have taken the risk of a fall for the chance of success. Should they fortunately succeed, what a glorious old time they will have dispensing among themselves the spoils of the richest, and heretofore best-governed Province in the Dominion ! It would not be long after they got there before Ontario would lose her proud distinction of being the only country in the world that has no public debt, whose resources are untouched and whose Government is the most honest and economical that was ever known. , . . If ever common sense was needed by a people it is needed by the people of Ontario in the crisis created by designing and wholly unprincipled demagogues. But, if the Liberal party will only stand true to themselves they can prevent a change of Government in Ontario, which under the circumstances stated, will be nothing short of a national calamity.”

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### A Quebec Opinion.

The Montreal *Gazette*, the ablest Conservative journal in Canada, says :— “ Quebec pays out nearly one-third of its revenue in interest ; Ontario has no charge under this head. The tremendous advantage this gives to the sister Province, however, is increased by the higher expenditure of Quebec in other items in the general statement. When it is remembered that in Ontario there are one-third more people than in Quebec, and that naturally the cost there should be greater, these figures are all the more significant. It costs Quebec more for legislation, and nearly as much for civil government, as it does Ontario. The charges for the administration of justice in the two Provinces are not in proportion to the population. Quebec manages to spend much more on agriculture than Ontario, without apparently getting so much benefit from it. For education the expenditure in the two Provinces are fairly proportionate, but in all the other items, except public institutions, which Ontario has on a better scale than any community almost in America, the charges are heavy beyond reason in Quebec, and show a constant tendency to increase. Then while Ontario draws on her accumulated funds for capital expenditure at a moderate rate, Quebec has to depend upon loans to meet an outlay on this account.”

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### The Natural Conclusion.

Among thoughtful electors Ontario is admitted to be one of the best-governed Provinces in the Confederation. The Provincial Ministers are men of national reputation. They are spoken of all over Canada as among the greatest of her sons and the best and purest of her administrators. The men whose abilities entitle them to this national pre-eminence, and who have lifted Ontario to her proud place among the Provinces, ought not and will not appeal in vain for a renewal of the confidence of their fellow-citizens, and will not be overthrown by a set of cries which endanger the peace of the community and imperil the true interests of all classes of the population.